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ABSTRACT

The three essays in this collection (the third in a series) explore the implications of free speech, the roots of American foreign policy, and the relation between U.S. political tradition and the formulation of policies on energy. Each essay is accompanied by a commentary. The essays, their authors, and the commentaries are: "The Pig in the Parlor: Weighing the Price of Free Speech" (Leslie Pickering Francis, commentary by Delmont Oswald); "The City on the Hill: America's Role in the World" (Joan Hoff, commentary by Kenneth L. Gladish); and "You Can't Always Get What You Want: The Paralysis of American Energy Policy" (Howard Schwartz, commentary by Henry Hirschbiel). (DB)

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THE HUMANITIES AND THE ART OF PUBLIC DISCUSSION

Volume 3

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THE HUMANITIES AND THE ART OF PUBLIC DISCUSSION

Volume 3

Essays and Commentaries on

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

AMERICA'S ROLE IN THE WORLD

AND U.S. ENERGY POLICY

by Leslie Pickering Francis, Delmont Oswald
Joan Hoff, Kenneth L. Gladish
Howard Schwartz, Henry Hirschbiel

A project sponsored by
the Federation of State Humanities Councils
in partnership with
the Kettering Foundation.

FEDERATION OF
STATE HUMANITIES
COUNCILS

1012 Fourteenth Street NW, #1007
Washington, D.C. 20005

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FOREWORD

AS EVENTS UNFOLDED throughout this remarkable year, Americans watched the world literally change its shape. We saw a war begin and end, witnessed the collapse of a 70-year-old system of government, heard cries for independence from a dozen regions whose unfamiliar names we realized we now needed to incorporate into our cartographical vocabulary. We learned that if we picked the wrong day to skip the evening newscast, we might miss an entire coup attempt. If we took a vacation to a remote location during a crucial week, several new nations might have come into being before we returned home.

In such a world, it is easy to become overwhelmed, resign oneself to the role of passive spectator, barely able to keep up with events, much less participate in them. But in fact it is in precisely such a world, and at such a time, that we most need to discuss, to reflect, to draw on the accumulated and enduring wisdom that can help us make sense of a changing and turbulent situation. What does history tell us about the making and unmaking of nations? What can we learn from imaginative literature of the myriad ways human beings relate to each other, to their homeland, to the natural world? What framework can philosophers give us for assessing the values that guide our day-to-day lives and decisions, large and small?

When we ask such questions, we are of course talking about the humanities. When we bring the humanities to the discussion of public policy, we enlarge the scope of the discussion, as Henry Hirschbiel points out in one of the essays that follow, in a way that clarifies rather than complicates the issues.

In an interview published by the Federation several years ago, Rachel Trickett, then dean of St. Hugh's College in Oxford, suggested that the origin of evil lay in "the inability to see or to feel or envisage what goes beyond the narrow round of your own experience." We are

most likely to do harm, in other words, when we are allowed to cling to a confined, shrunken view of our world. And the danger increases the more strongly we believe that ours is the only vision.

The value of public discussion is that it forces us to see issues from other perspectives. Ideas and viewpoints thrown into the "marketplace of ideas," as Leslie Francis says, are removed from artificial protection, tested, refined and sometimes radically altered. And when these ideas are seen in the larger context of the humanities—the broad patterns of history, the frameworks of philosophical thought—they are tested yet further.

It was to provide this framework for discussion that the Federation of State Humanities Councils and the Kettering Foundation formed the partnership that produced the essays printed here. Each year for the past three years, the Federation has identified leading humanities scholars to offer their perspectives on the topics selected for the National Issues Forums. This year these scholars have explored the implications of freedom of speech, the roots of American foreign policy, and the relation between our political tradition and the formulation of energy policy. Their essays, and the commentaries by state humanities council executive directors, are challenging and thought provoking. They are designed to prompt discussion and disagreement of the sort that tests ideas. We extend a special thanks to the authors of these essays, and we invite you, the readers, to join in the discussion.

Esther Mackintosh
Project Director and Vice-President
Federation of State Humanities Councils

[T]he sole end for which mankind are warranted, individually or collectively, in interfering with the liberty of action of any of their number, is self-protection.

—J.S. Mill, On Liberty

The most stringent protection of free speech would not protect a man in falsely shouting fire in a theatre and causing a panic....The question in every case is whether the words used are used in such circumstances and are of such a nature as to create a clear and present danger that they will bring about the substantive evils that Congress has a right to prevent.

—Justice O.W. Holmes, Jr., *Schenck v. United States*

The First Amendment says in no equivocal language that Congress shall pass no law abridging freedom of speech, press, assembly or position

—Justice Hugo Black, *Barenblatt v. United States*

A nuisance may be merely a right thing in the wrong place—like a pig in the parlor instead of the barnyard.

—Justice George Sutherland, *Euclid v. Amber Realty*

THE PIG IN THE PARLOR: WEIGHING THE PRICE OF FREE SPEECH

Leslie Pickering Francis

HONKY. WHITEY. NIGGER. KIKE. WOP. JAP. BABE. WHORE. FAGGOT. As epithets go, these are on the mild and more familiar side. Yet they have not lost the capacity to shock, hurt, and degrade. Nor would we want them to lose this capacity. These words remind us of the power of speech to wound and destroy, a power that cannot be ignored by defenders of individual liberty.

Political theorists who value individual liberty, such as John Stuart Mill, have regarded speech as the most central of freedoms. Speech comes first in the Bill of Rights. But why should speech be given such pride of place, especially in light of its destructive power, by what have been traditionally called liberal political theorists—that is, theorists who regard liberty as a paramount value? Historically, liberals have given two kinds of answers, the first arising from a picture of what a genuinely free individual is like, and the second rooted in a commitment to human progress.

The settler of the Western frontier, the self-made man, and some portraits of the liberated woman share a common ideal of freedom of the individual: freedom means choosing one's own identity, values, and lifestyle. Liberal political theorists believe that free speech is critical to this vision of the free individual. Without free speech, individuals may be unable to articulate, examine, and defend the structures of their lives. They may never hear about lives different from their own. They may be unable to try out new thoughts on others and see how others react. And they may be unable to express how their own identities are changing, or what they would like to become. Through the exchange of ideas, individuals can choose to remain in traditional communities, now more fully understood. They can also hear about and choose the new. If individuals remain with the traditional without the interchanges of free speech, we cannot be

certain that their commitment to the traditional is truly chosen. The liberal model of the freely choosing self is a self that makes a decision after examination and deliberation. If it is a self of return, it is of return after detachment. If, in the words of Thomas Wolfe, you can't go home again, it is a self that has been uprooted. If, in the words of Socrates, the unexamined life is not worth living, it is a self with the ultimate potential for wisdom and respect.

To many critics, however, this liberal ideal threatens relationships and communities. The Amish, for example, choose not to send their children to public schools after the eighth grade; could such tightly knit and unique communities survive the onslaught of the modern world? Liberals reply that such communities could indeed survive, and survive on a firmer basis, if they were chosen by their members after exposure to alternatives. Liberals also reply that if such communities would not survive education, they are deeply flawed and ought perhaps to pass into history. Communities as tightly knit as the Amish are unusual. Nonetheless, these values of community are echoed in the concerns of other Americans, who hope that their children will grow up to share their values, their neighbors will continue to be people with whom they feel comfortable, and their cities will not grow further alien and frightening. These Americans fear that new ideas might disrupt this common ground.

Critics of the liberal vision of individuals freely choosing their own identities also assert that the vision misconceives the nature of the self. We are not, these critics say, blank slates choosing what is to be written upon us. Our lives are not "up to us" in such radical ways. We are born into relationships and histories, and these connections form our very identities. Some of these critics draw analogies, perhaps even causal linkages, between fragmented communities and fragmented selves. These critics question whether we need full freedom of expression to test out who we are and what we would like to become. They fear that the result of free choice of lifestyle will be confusion, alienation, and lost understanding of who we really are.

This picture of individuals growing by freely choosing the lives they will lead is one argument liberals have offered for freedom of expression. The second major line of argument rests on the benefits of speech to humanity generally. For utilitarian liberals—that is, liberals who justify liberty on the grounds of its long-term benefits—speech is instrumental in the functioning of a free market of ideas. In the long run, if we let ideas be challenged freely, in open competition,

we will better pursue what Mill called "the permanent interests of mankind as a progressive being." Through speech, we articulate and test ideas. We learn that the earth is not flat and that it revolves around the sun. We develop atomic energy, map the human genome, and remind ourselves of the fragile ecology of rain forests.

This view holds that the marketplace of free entry, exit, sale, and consumption, will be effective over the long run in offering up ideas that contribute to progress. If the market fails to offer up good ideas, or if other methods for encouraging and disseminating ideas would do better, the utilitarian defense of free speech collapses. There are very real difficulties with markets generally, which, critics claim, cast doubt on whether an entirely unregulated market in speech will successfully generate important ideas. One central concern is that consumers lack the knowledge to make intelligent choices about complex products. Consumers of ideas may be unable to understand difficult social or scientific theories, or they may confuse good literature and junk. Another concern about free markets is that monopolies tend to develop, especially when the expense of bringing out new products creates significant barriers to entry for new producers. From mass media to bookstore chains, the expense today of disseminating ideas effectively can be staggering, and those whose ideas can "sell" may be the most successful in getting a hearing.

Another difficulty with markets is that the choices some people make about products may impose costs on others that are not reflected in the product's price; this is the classic problem of externalities, when the factory smoke fouls nearby air but the product price does not include the costs of the smoke. Racist speech is just one example of how the ideas expressed by some people may, like factory smoke, impose costs on others. Finally, markets may fail to offer up preferred products for sale because consumers who want the product lack resources or are unable to get together to pool resources to be sure that the product appears. The voices of the unorganized, the dispossessed, or the just plain novel, may never be heard at all.

These are difficulties with unregulated markets wherever they appear. Critics also question whether the marketplace is a defensible analogy for ideas. Perhaps free and equal competition is not how ideas are best developed and nurtured. Competition may drive ideas down to the least common denominator—comic books or romance novels. Or, if consumers make poor choices, the result may be the dominance of mistaken ideas, such as the belief that the sun revolves

around the earth, perhaps for centuries. And there may be the irritation of having to reengage old battles, to reiterate, again and again, the theory of evolution or the inefficacy of patent remedies. However, condemning romance novels may be sheer snobbery. Moreover, the liberal reminds us, in the rehashing of these old battles, we all too frequently are embarrassed to learn that the stubborn critic of our settled ideas was right.

What may be more troubling, the marketplace of speech exposes us to the bizarre, the offensive, and the dangerous. There are real harms here, which the utilitarian liberal must weigh in the balance against the benefits of progress. Some of these are the harms of offensiveness; we hear stories that we would rather never encounter, of eroticism, masochism, and inhuman cruelty. Sometimes we are dismayed to find these ugly stories at home, with our children. Still other harms are psychological wounds, such as the scars of racist epithets. And there are physical dangers, too. Speech starts the panicked stampede from Holmes' crowded theater, incites crowds to violence, and passes the word about how to make bombs.

There are real conflicts, therefore, about the values that support speech, between autonomy and community and between longer range progress and immediate hurt and danger. Despite the conflicts, some theorists still argue for absolutist positions on one side or the other. Speech should always be protected, says one side. Or, communities should be preserved, even at the cost of speech, says the other. But speech does sometimes kill; and, as Amy Gutmann pointed out, the community of colonial Salem, Massachusetts, burned witches. So both of these absolutist strategies ignore the contexts within which speech and suppression should be judged.

Mindful of these conflicts, liberals have experimented with different kinds of compromise. Some of these compromises have involved legal limits on speech. At times, American courts have set these limits in terms of physical risk: speech can be suppressed when there is a clear and present danger. Epithets can be prohibited when they would provoke fights—although in this case the reactions of the hearer are a crucial link in creating the danger. Other, less liberal courts have subordinated the benefits of speech to concerns about threats to national security or integrity, such as the perceived threat of communism.

The currently popular constitutional compromise is to allow communities to seek to protect themselves by regulating the time,

place and manner of speech, short of outright prohibition. Offensive speech can be kept out of the parlor, relegated to late night television or the far corners of downtown. One community, for example, ruled that George Carlin's "dirty words" satires could be aired on radio programs in the late evening but not on Sunday mornings.

Perhaps the deepest compromise in liberal political theory is to make a strong distinction between our public and our private lives. Legal freedom does not mean that speech will actually be heard. Even John Stuart Mill was explicit that in our private lives we should remain free to avoid those with whom we disagree, or whom we find distasteful. Unpleasant speech can simply be ignored. We can refuse to subscribe to countercultural newspapers, we can put lock boxes on our televisions, and we can send our children to private schools or teach them at home. We can refuse to allocate federal funding for discussion of abortion or for exhibits of despised art.

These compromises may avert danger and shore up community in the short run, but they are deeply problematic. In the first place, it is far too easy to overestimate the likelihood of danger, particularly when the perceived threat comes from a source we dislike. Self-protective, we may judge too quickly that an utterance will spark violence. We may confuse the likelihood of violence with the likelihood that speech will influence citizens' beliefs and commitments. Or, as in the anticommunism of the 1950s, we may wildly overestimate the possibility that speech will change very many minds at all.

Secondly, judgments about what is offensive may simply reinforce conventional s@reotypes. Communities have rejected homoerotic art as filth; banned dance for nudity, both in the barroom and on the concern stage; and recoiled at adolescent fiction. Sometimes these judgments have been defended by asserting that such expressions are dangerous. Erotic speech, it is said, will bring sex crime along with it. But like the judgments of imminent violence, these judgments are often made without empirical support. The underlying "harm" that is feared is not violent crime, but changes in values and ideas. These changes are not harm in the physical sense, and the argument for protecting us ag@inst them must be a very different one from the argument for protecting us against stampedes when "fire" is shouted in a crowded theater. Some of the strongest arguments along these lines have been made recently by feminists objecting to pornography. Pornography does not literally kill, but it kills metaphorically. It teaches women to think nothing of themselves, and men to think of

women as objects. Even here, the argument is metaphorical and may overestimate the effects of pornography on how we think and feel. Compromise brings with it the risk that we will sacrifice far more speech than the compromise actually warrants.

There are further limitations to the liberal compromise between the public and the private spheres. To give speech legal protection is not to ensure that it will be heard. If the majority disagrees with a point of view, it may remain unfunded, orphaned. Unnamed and unspoken, it may fade away, like Ralph Ellison's invisible man. This marginalization is the common theme of critics who decry the failure of the market; the increased development of restrictions on speech by private institutions; and time, place and manner restrictions on speech. Legal protection is no help against dispossession, marginalization, or rejection.

I am something of a pragmatist. This means that I distrust sweeping, absolutist answers. I think we must try to understand the dangers of speech and the dangers of suppression in different historical contexts. Racist epithets may be horribly demeaning when they are uttered by the powerful against those whose self-confidence is tenuous at best; they may be merely annoying when they are spoken by groups whose views are so little shared that they are themselves the subject of ridicule. For example, the resurgence of racist speech on American college campuses has been especially troubling because it seems to reflect a renewal of racism among the elite. Compromises such as time, place, and manner restrictions are appealing because they seem to permit communities to maintain what they perceive to be their integrity, while allowing other communities of ideas to spring up nearby. If they are appropriately drawn, time, place, and manner restrictions can also serve to remind some that hate speech really is hateful, and to insulate others from the severity of its blows.

Nonetheless, if we value choice and diversity, time, place, and manner restrictions must be sensitive to the need to be heard. In some contexts, it may be better to protect speech absolutely than to risk the suppression that may come even with time, place and manner restrictions. We are far more likely to want to curtail the expression of hated points of view, than to limit equally ugly, but widely shared expression. It is very difficult to build a meaningful life around snatches of late night television. Another side of turning the pig out of the parlor is a commitment to giving it a real home, quite nearby, where it, too, can be nurtured. Yet another side is recognizing that it

only looks like a pig because of the design of the parlor itself and the attitudes of the people within.

FOR FURTHER READING

Fred Berger, *Freedom, Rights & Pornography*

Ray Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*

Patrick Devlin, *The Enforcement of Morals*

John Dewey, *Freedom and Culture*

H.L.A. Hart, *Law, Liberty, and Morality*

Anthony Lewis, *Make No Law: The Sullivan Case and the First Amendment*

John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*

COMMENTARY

It is perhaps most appropriate that in the year celebrating the Bicentennial of the Bill of Rights, special attention be given to the rights and significance of individual liberty and the freedom of expression. It is also ironic that in this same celebratory period, these rights have come under extreme scrutiny and attack at both local and top governmental and legal levels. It is even stranger that these most recent attacks have come just when totalitarian governmental systems have proven themselves inadequate and many nations are looking at democracy in a new and receptive way for the first time.

Professor Francis has very carefully laid out arguments on both liberal and conservative approaches for interpreting the laws that govern these aspects of our lives. The humanities lie at the very core of such interpretations. It is the humanities disciplines of history, ethics, aesthetics and jurisprudence, combined with the use of criticism, logic, evaluative and language skills, that the creators and interpreters of the law rely upon as they determine what will be written. And we all know law that is written becomes the basis around which we are judged and order our lives.

A case in point is the attack last year on the National Endowment for the Arts for its use of public funds to underwrite a photographic exhibit of the works of Robert Mapplethorpe. This particular

exhibit brought forth the ire of top politicians, lawyers, religious and moral rights activists. To its defense have come artists and other lawyers claiming the right of freedom of expression and local audiences demanding the freedom to view what they wish and to make their own decisions about its content without others determining what is or is not appropriate.

While not directly attacked, the National Endowment for the Humanities has been equally affected by association. These two national agencies, established to promote and develop a strong cultural core for our nation and to improve the quality of life, have actually been threatened with termination unless they more carefully regulate the choice of the projects they consider for support.

Few federal agencies can equal the record of accountability of the National Endowments, yet they are under fire for doing exactly what they were mandated to do—represent all artists and scholars without establishing a state approved form of art or way of thinking. Does the Mapplethorpe exhibit offend some people? Certainly it does. Do the terms "politically correct thinking" and "state approved ideas" likewise offend? We certainly hope so, if we truly espouse the concepts of freedom so elemental to a democracy.

The power of the visual image, the written word, and the power of ideas have been recognized as both something to be cherished and feared. They have the ability to both elevate and destroy, and it is you and I who have to determine which will be the case for ourselves and those for whom we are responsible. The easy way would be to let the state or other people make that determination for us, especially the experts or authorities who should have more specialized knowledge. The results of this giving away of individual rights and choices, however, can be seen as damaging, as it has been time after time through history. Some religious leaders say "only that which elevates the soul to heaven is appropriate, especially when funded by tax dollars." At the other extreme famous writers such as Henry Miller state, "the only thing that is obscene is inertia." Some thinkers say every action and thought is relative and others say there is an absolute authority concerning the determination of good and evil. Moral determination and values conflicts constantly challenge every aspect of our lives and the laws we establish to bring and maintain order. The vehemence with which sides are chosen is evidence of the importance of these issues and the strongest side ultimately defines the power structure.

Democracy has often been criticized as its own worst enemy, because it promises that all voices will be heard, even if it is the majority vote that ultimately determines action. It also relies upon an educated, reasonable, and concerned membership that always has the freedom to express itself. This is especially critical in a nation such as the United States that is so diverse in its makeup.

Some have said the freedom of expression should exist in the private sector but not in agencies funded by tax dollars. How can a government not be the leading example of constitutional rights? To function objectively and fairly, they must have a process in which all voices can and must be heard. If voices are restricted, we are participating in censorship. Kathleen M. Sullivan, Harvard Law Professor, points out, however, that the Supreme Court has held, "the First Amendment applies whether the government is wielding its checkbook or its badge." She further points out that "making art possible," even controversial art such as Mapplethorpe's, "is not to condone it." While some have called for restrictions to be applied on projects submitted to the Endowments so that "obscene" projects will not be funded, we have to ask the questions: What is obscene? And who determines what is obscene? How can a nation that distrusts loyalty oaths impose conformity oaths? Any restraints would produce what has been referred to in the press as a "chilling effect." Justice Thurgood Marshall best defined this concept when he stated, "The problem with the sword of Democles is that it hangs—not that it drops."

I was told once, "If you want to be an authority, read one book." The minute you read a second point of view you lose the status of the term. Humanities scholars make the world and decision making more complex because they are the custodians and exemplars of knowledge in all its diversity. They help the public make its decisions by bringing forth a variety of facts, knowledge and ways of evaluating and thinking. Does this make the process more difficult? Yes. But it also makes the process more reasonable, and decisions are made with a greater understanding of their long-term implications. Through art, history, literature, we begin to see ourselves both individually and collectively, a first step if we are to be objective in evaluating our own values, ethical beliefs and purposes in light of our individual needs, the common good, and the historical good.

Delmont Oswald, Executive Director,
Utah Humanities Council

THE CITY ON THE HILL: AMERICA'S ROLE IN THE WORLD

Joan Hoff

SHORTLY AFTER THE 1991 WAR in the Persian Gulf, a political cartoon depicted the United States "giving a [war] party" to which "the enemy [Iraq] had refused to come." Yet "victory celebrations" in Washington, D.C., New York, and other major cities in June 1991, accompanied by an uncharacteristically massive display of high tech armament, gave the distinct impression that the United States had won a "fun," essentially bloodless war—more like a Nintendo game played on a real world stage.

The images conveyed by the political cartoon and by patriotic parades are both partially accurate. Saddam Hussein's forces did conduct a basically static defensive and often his troops refused to fight during this unbelievably short and intensely technological "hyperwar." Certain stated military objectives were achieved: the Iraqis left Kuwait; Saddam's army was destroyed; and Iraq's nuclear, chemical, biological, and Scud warfare capabilities were severely damaged, although not completely eliminated as initially reported. Most allied political objectives were not achieved: Saddam remained in power; the "free" Kuwait remained undemocratic with its oil wells on fire and incapable of producing for the time being; and the Middle East was left no more stable than before the war. The achievement of this partial *status quo ante* resulted in the deaths of some 120,000 Iraqi soldiers and an estimated 200,000 civilians, largely due to disease and malnutrition. At the same time 268 Americans were killed in combat-related action, and the war itself initially cost about $1 billion a day for the first three months, not including the ongoing expense of keeping an encampment of allied troops in Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Kuwait.

What then did the nation celebrate or honor with these parades in June? A New World Order? Return of less than half the troops

originally deployed? Victory? Patriotism? Militarism? Successful testing of high tech weapons? Our dead veterans and their families? The end of the defeatist Vietnam Syndrome? And what will American foreign policy become in the wake of the war? These questions have led to speculation about the need to reassess U.S. diplomacy for the remainder of this decade. They also prompt us to consider whether the history of previous changes in American foreign policy can help us anticipate what the country should or could do as the "pre-eminent" power in the world at the end of the twentieth century.

The role of the United States in the world has obviously changed in the last two hundred years. In particular, three different stages in the nation's economic development have affected the conduct of American diplomacy. Beginning as a small, indebted, commercial and agricultural nation following the American Revolution, we became an emerging industrial nation by the late nineteenth century with the aid of considerable foreign investment, and finally a major international creditor nation following the First World War. Throughout these two centuries, the country has continuously adapted its foreign policy goals and doctrines to match the evolution of its economic, political, and military power. A look at the three periods of economic development will provide an illustration.

From 1776 until 1900, U.S. foreign policy adhered to several principles based entirely on its position as a relatively powerless, developing nation in a world dominated by England and France. American presidents during this time supported, to varying degrees, the following diplomatic principles: the right of people to decide their own national boundaries, neutrality, freedom of the seas, international cooperation in settling boundary and fishing disputes, and continental expansion, better known as Manifest Destiny. Certain foreign policy events or developments accompanied these diplomatic principles. For example, in 1793 George Washington's famous Proclamation of Neutrality announced that America would "pursue a conduct friendly and impartial toward the belligerent Powers" of Europe. Three years later, he described America's political, but not economic, isolationism in his 1796 Farewell Address, which warned the nation against permanent alliances and involvement in the diplomatic affairs of other nations but not against "temporary alliances for extraordinary emergencies" or commercial relations.

From the late eighteenth century until World War I, the United States defined neutrality and freedom of the seas in absolute terms.

But at this time the nation did not have sufficient economic or military power to enforce its diplomatic principles. The same was true of such famous presidential declarations as the Monroe Doctrine. Proclaimed by President Madison in 1823, the doctrine was intended to prevent intervention by European powers in Latin America in particular, and the Western Hemisphere in general. However, most foreign countries virtually ignored and randomly violated the Monroe Doctrine for most of the nineteenth century. Likewise, until the twentieth century, American political isolationism was dictated as much by its inferior trading position as by its geographical separation from Europe and Asia.

In the nineteenth century the United States had the power and volition to pursue consistently only two diplomatic principles: continental expansionism and international arbitration of minor disputes. Thus, the country added territory through treaties or wars with Native American Indians and foreign countries, starting with the Louisiana Purchase in 1803 and ending with the Spanish American War in 1898. Related to this territorial expansionism was American commitment to economic expansionism. This policy, eventually known as the Open Door policy, promoted the idea of equal economic opportunity where the United States faced serious economic competition abroad. It was initially an attempt to limit the economic and territorial expansion of foreign powers in China. At the time of its proclamation, however, America had little economic and no military power to enforce the Open Door Policy, but it became the slogan under which the United States pursued economic expansionism for most of the twentieth century. The flip side is the Closed Door Policy that the United States has followed whenever it had dominant economic influence, especially in Latin America.[1]

Ironically, neither the Monroe Doctrine nor the Open Door Policy was intended by the administrations in which they originated to become permanent features of American foreign policy, and yet both did. This demonstrates the danger of such proclamations—that diplomatic principles designed for a particular era will live on after they have outlived their original purpose simply because growth in national power makes them enforceable. This "life after obsolescence" is especially true of presidential doctrines that become official without Congressional approval (a practice going back to Washington's Proclamation of Neutrality). It has become more common since the onset of the Cold War.

In the first two decades of this century, as the United States became a world power, economic and political interests became increasingly couched in moralistic terms about promoting democracy abroad. Since the seventeenth century, the United States had been content to be a city set on a hill with the "eies of all people uppon us," in Puritan John Winthrop's words—a moral model.[2] Although the country had been launched by a revolution based on the principle of self-determination, and despite all the talk about the superior morality and democratic way of American life in the nineteenth century, the United States did not seek to impose these principles abroad.

This self-restraint diminished as the United States began to militarily occupy and/or establish protectorates in Caribbean countries in the early twentieth century. Diplomatic assertiveness in the name of democracy and morality dramatically increased under President Woodrow Wilson, who, before the First World War, sent American troops into Mexico in order to "teach the South American republics to elect good men," and who, of course, coined the famous description of that war as one that would make the world "safe for democracy."[3] This relatively new feature of U.S. foreign policy—the moral imperative to export democracy—waned in the 1920s and 1930s, only to return with new vigor once the Cold War began in the late 1940s. It continues down to the present. In other words, as the United States became more powerful and able to assert its national interests abroad, its foreign policy rhetoric became more moralistic—almost as though its leaders felt a need to rationalize its increasing economic and military power in other than pragmatic terms.

Once the United States emerged as a major world power in the course of World War I, the country also dramatically reversed some of its former diplomatic positions on neutrality, freedom of the seas, and even self-determination. Thus, American leaders no longer defended the rights of neutral nations or honored their claims to freedom of the seas as their predecessors had before the nation became a major naval and economic power in the world. They also sanctioned the arbitrary boundaries created by its former allies in Yugoslavia and in violation of the principle of self-determination.

The United States also modified its concept of isolationism in the 1920s. Because the country became a leading industrial and creditor nation for the first time in that decade, politicians and businessmen cooperated in further limiting the country's practice of isolationism as the country's political and economic interests expanded during that

decade. Although the Great Depression and events leading to World War II prompted more talk about isolationism in the 1930s, the economic size and military power of the United States has prevented it from effectively practicing isolationism from that time to the present.

Even though the United States did not join the League of Nations or the World Court in the interwar years, it began to participate in a greater number of international conferences on disarmament, peace, and international economic matters than ever before and, of course, became a major force behind the creation of the United Nations in 1945. So its nineteenth-century commitment to international arbitration continued until the outbreak of the Cold War. In fighting what was portrayed as a battle to the death with communism, the United States adopted an interventionist foreign policy known as globalism or internationalism based "on the assumption that the security and prosperity of every place on earth is vital to America's own."[4] Postwar leaders hoped that U.S. global internationalism would be approved by noncommunist countries under the auspices of the United Nations. When that support did not materialize, successive American presidents moved to negotiate regional collective security alliances such as North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO, 1949) and Southeast Asia Treat (SEATO, 1954), bilateral treaties of mutual defense with the Philippines, Japan, South Korea, and Nationalist China. And they proclaimed a number of unilateral presidential doctrines on foreign policy beginning with the Truman Doctrine in 1947 through the Reagan Doctrine in 1984.[5]

Consequently, when the United Nations did not provide reliable support for America's efforts to combat communism all over the world in the 1950s and 1960s, opposition to the organization increased in government and popular circles in the United States. But the lack of U.N. support was not surprising: since the 1950s two-thirds of the votes in the U.N. General Assembly have been controlled by nonaligned, developing nations from the Third World who believed that U.S. globalism made them mere pawns in a bipolar Cold War game, especially when "hot wars" broke out between the two superpowers or their surrogates as in Korea, Vietnam, and Angola. (The U.N. has only recently begun to return to favor in the United States as a result of its support for allied action in the Gulf War.)

Finally, as one of the two most powerful nations of the Cold War period, the United States tried to enforce the Monroe Doctrine and the

Closed Door Policy in Latin America and to exercise influence in other parts of the world through foreign aid or military intervention whenever it decided that its economic or security interests were threatened. Increasingly it honored the territorial integrity of undemocratic nations if they were noncommunist and interfered with or disapproved of self-determination if it resulted in the establishment of communist governments. Thus, President Eisenhower sent marines into Lebanon in 1958, President Kennedy approved the invasion of Cuba in 1961 by CIA trained commandos and initiated the introduction of American forces in Vietnam that same year. Under President Johnson, these troops reached a peak level of 542,000 in 1969 without any Congressional declaration of war. In the early 1970s President Nixon used the CIA to help overthrow the democratically elected socialist government of Salvador Allende Gossens, and Presidents Reagan and Bush successfully sent U.S. troops to invade both Grenada and Panama in the late 1980s.

More often modern American presidents have conducted military and nonmilitary foreign policy during the Cold War under the rhetoric of bipartisanship, which in the 1950s meant that leaders of the Republican and Democratic parties agreed to unite behind anticommunism. However, as the domestic consensus for such anticommunist internationalism began to break down in the 1960s as a result of the lengthy, undeclared war in Vietnam, it became more and more difficult to maintain even the facade of bipartisanship. The term "nonpartisan" has often been used by more recent presidents to gain support for their foreign policies, but more and more it appears to mean, simply, "nondiscussion" of diplomacy. How will this development affect the brand of democracy we export to liberated areas in the post-Cold War period of the 1990s?

If we are to advise emerging democracies in other parts of the world effectively (to say nothing of honestly), we must look at the reality rather than the rhetoric about democracy in this country.[6] Since the onset of the Cold War over fifty years ago, American presidents have used national security to assume "semi-constitutional" power in the conduct of foreign policy. The Cold War, for example, gave U.S. presidents authority to issue executive orders in violation of civil rights (as in Roosevelt's internment of U.S. citizens of Japanese descent during World War II, as well as wiretapping authorized by Presidents Kennedy, Johnson and Nixon) and to conduct military interventions abroad without congressional approval, the domestic

results of which have almost always been the censorship of information, suppression of dissent, and retreat from internal reform.[7] Thus, the presumed necessity of marshalling first a bipartisan and then a "nonpartisan" foreign policy in order to fight communism abroad has increasingly stifled domestic political discussion about American foreign policy goals. In recent years "nonpartisan" has threatened to become a substitute for "nondiscussion." A highly emotional moralistic and patriotic rhetoric (in which sports, sex, and religious symbols abound) characterizes the singularly *undemocratic* way foreign policy issues are now presented to the American people.[8] This same emotionally charged "nondiscussion" of issues was all too evident in government presentations and press coverage of events leading up to and continuing through the Gulf War in the Middle East. Americans may have been inundated with TV coverage censored by the Pentagon, but they were not well informed.

Instead of practicing what we are now preaching to newly liberated nations about using free expression, opposition parties, and self-determination for peacefully resolving their ethnic and religious disputes, we seem to be basking in the illusion that democracy at home requires less rather than more discussion—that it must be safe and consensual in the face of all the moral relativism and difficult economic problems here and abroad. Thomas Jefferson and other Founders did not believe that consensus outweighed the value of debate in the formulation of foreign policy or in defining democratic citizenship. For example, they knew responsible citizenship in a democracy was (and should be) raucous and demanding—not passive and nonparticipatory. Only if we understand how far removed we are from our own original concepts of democratic citizenship, will we be able to advise emerging nations more realistically about how to move toward representative government and toward peaceful and cooperative international relations now that the Cold War is over.

Obviously attitudes about democratic citizenship and morality in foreign policy have changed in this country. In the 1990s such attitudes are not (nor should they be) what they were in the 1790s or 1890s. Originally full citizenship was relegated to a small minority of property-owning white males. In the course of the nineteenth century the franchise was expanded to include most free white men, but until 1920, free white women were excluded. Only in the last twenty-five years have African-Americans and other racial minorities acquired the uninfringed right to vote and experience civil rights traditionally

reserved for whites only. Ironically, however, as suffrage and other rights have been expanded to include the entire adult population over eighteen years old in the United States, voluntary voting has decreased among all age groups, but especially among the recently enfranchised youth. Moreover, the percentage of Americans voting in presidential elections has declined steadily since the 1960s. Clearly, with two-thirds of the eligible electorate (or 120 million Americans) in the United States choosing not to vote in the November 1990 mid-term elections, one must question whether casting ballots is any longer a benchmark of American democratic citizenship.

If voting is no longer considered a premier prerequisite for democratic citizenship in the United States, why do we continue to stress it in our foreign policy for recently liberated countries? Moreover, in Central and Eastern Europe and in republics within the Soviet Union, we have not questioned the results of suspect "free" elections even when we know that some of the leaders being put forward have no commitment to democracy. In the face of the collapse of communism we must be more discriminating in offering our support to any and all new governments simply because they purport to be democratic and in weighing the merits of ethnic self-determination versus that of national territorial integrity.

At home, we must re-evaluate our democratic habits not only in terms of voting, but also in terms of the "semi-constitutional power" that the Cold War bestowed upon American presidents. From the Oval Office these men, in turn, often relied on policies designed secretly by unelected advisers and on occasion even circumvented democratic discussion of these policies at home—as evidenced by the secret bombing of Cambodia in the first Nixon administration and the secret National Security Council actions in violation of congressional legislation during the Iran/Contra affair under Reagan. Thus, in the course of the Cold War, a growing gap developed between the nation's needs at home and its expansive foreign policy goals. Any reconsideration of budgetary priorities and appropriations to resolve mounting domestic problems will not be undertaken in the 1990s if a lingering "Cold Warrior" mentality and global internationalism with all of their interventionist connotations continues to hamper the free exchange of ideas about controversial domestic and foreign issues, and if unrestricted internationalism continues to drive U.S. foreign policy.

Do traditional "Cold Warrior" attitudes continue to linger despite President George Bush's call for the New World Order? And in using

this slogan, is his administration stressing the word "new" or the word "order?" Was the Gulf War representative of a "new" or the "old" U.S. foreign policy? Is the American-dominated type of military alliance, such as prevailed during that conflict, the kind of international cooperation we want to emulate in the face of the collapse of communism in Central and Eastern Europe? Instead of a New World Order based on military coalitions sanctioned by the U.N., the Gulf War could be interpreted as the United States assuming the role of armed policeman of the world in those instances when our national self-interests are involved (in this case, oil) but not in other parts of the world less vital to us. To fight for freedom and stability in an area of the world that has yet to experience either, while continuing to ignore torture, murder, and military takeovers of governments in other areas, is not setting a new world standard for ethics here in the United States or internationally.

To date, there are only two things "new" about the New World Order and both are ethically problematic: the excessive use of high tech weapons on a third-rate military power in the Middle East; and the fact that for the first time in its history the United States (in part because of its current debtor status among world nations) did not think that it could or should pay for the war by itself. Hence, the United States put together a coalition to fight the Gulf War out of economic, not military need. Recognizing our economic vulnerability, will economic reality deter U.S. military actions in the post-Cold War era? Or will we see the day when American soldiers are "hired out" as mercenaries in future wars paid for by other nations. In 1991 we simply do not know the exact impact that our debt-ridden economy will have on U.S. foreign policy as we move toward the twenty-first century. Historically we do know, however, that economic change has altered the course of America's position in the world and its diplomacy. By the end of this decade it will have done so again.

Judging from previous developments in the foreign policy of the United States, it is evident that diplomatic precedents are not quickly discarded even in face of dramatic events like the victory over communism in Eastern and Central Europe and the victory over Iraq. Under these favorable circumstances, it is quite conceivable that we should not act like an arrogant world bully now that the Soviet Union, having abandoned communism, is fragmenting and Iraq reduced to subsistence existence. Instead, we might begin to think more modestly and more realistically abroad, rather than expansively, if we are to ad-

dress our domestic problems and become once again the moral and democratic "city set on a hill" for other nations to emulate or not—as they choose. Perhaps it is time to place less emphasis on ordering the world and more on setting our own domestic house in order.

1. Joan Hoff Wilson, *American Business and Foreign Policy, 1920-1933*, pp. 9-10, 157-218.

2. Winthrop quoted in Edmund S. Morgan, *The Puritan Dilemma: The Story of John Winthrop*, p. 70.

3. Wilson quoted in Arthur S. Link, *Woodrow Wilson and the Progressive Era, 1910-1917*, pp. 119, 281.

4. Alan Tonelson, "What Is the National Interest?" *The Atlantic Monthly*, July 1991, p. 35.

5. The Truman Doctrine (1947) proclaimed initially in reference to Greece and Turkey, but later applied to other parts of the world, stated that "it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures." The Eisenhower Doctrine (1957) gave unilateral notice that the United States would intervene in the Middle East if any government threatened by a Communist takeover requested aid. The Nixon Doctrine (1969), originally aimed at "southern tier" Third World countries in East Asia, came to represent the formal institutionalization of the policy of Vietnamization; that is, it noted that while the United States continued to support regional security and national self-sufficiency for nations in the Far East, it would no longer commit American troops to this effort. The Reagan Doctrine (1986) announced that American foreign policy would actively promote democracy throughout the world by giving humanitarian and military aid to "democratic revolutions" where ever they occurred.

6. Ideally, American democracy consists of four basic principles. First, there is the supposition that no other country in the world has trusted its past and future to so many free elections and the peaceful transition of power. The corollary to this is that democratic government in the United States was (and is) owned and operated by voting citizens. Third, it is usually assumed that our unique system of checks and balances, along with our two-party system, makes us impervious to the plutocratic, oligarchic, or autocratic pitfalls that have plagued other democracies because these ensure the enactment of just laws and policies that have been vigorously debated by an involved citizenry. Finally, judicial interpretations of our written Constitution has produced for Americans the greatest amount of civil liberties and freedom of expression every granted by any government to its people. Few would quarrel with this description of American democracy—in theory. In practice, however, democratic citizenship in the United States fails far short of this idealization.

7. For a review of censorship patterns in the United States, with emphasis on the twentieth century, see Joan Hoff-Wilson, "The Pluralist Society," in New York Public Library, *Censorship: 500 Years of Conflict*, pp. 103-115.

8. For a discussion of ways in which the growth of state power has "de-democratized"

politics in the United States while at the same time promoting a superficial type of democracy abroad, see Sheldon S. Wolin, *The Presence of the Past: Essays on the State and the Constitution*, pp. 180-207.

FOR FURTHER READING

Foreign Affairs, "After the War," 70, no. 2 (Spring 1991)

Foreign Polic, "After the Gulf War," no. 82 (Spring 1991)

Melvin P. Leffler, "Was the Cold War Necessary?" *Diplomatic History*, 15, no. 2 (Spring 1991)

Robert D. Schulzinger, "Complaints, Self-justifications, and Analysis: The Historiography of American Foreign Relations since 1969," *Diplomatic History*, 15, no. 2 (Spring 1991)

Alan Tonelson, "Interventionism vs. Minding Our Own Business: Charting a New American Foreign Policy," *The Atlantic Monthly*, July 1991

Sheldon S. Wolin, *The Presence of the Past: Essays on the State and the Constitution*

COMMENTARY

If Americans are to understand their current role and future place in world politics, we must know more of our own history. We must abandon the unproven assumptions, unfounded opinions, and perfected prejudices on which we so easily rely. We must seek to know the truth about the past character and present condition of our engagement in the world. In short, we must be responsible students, careful readers and astute observers of all the past has to teach us. Only then can we responsibly exercise our obligations and our franchise as informed citizens.

Joan Hoff's essay on "America's Role in the World" is, on its face, informed by the critical sensibility and historical consciousness required for such citizenship. She illumines much about the true story of America's historic engagement in the world. Her essay demands careful reading and reflection.

This is especially the case because she is not simply "giving the facts." Her essay is in the tradition of advocate history. It is an interpretive essay which is clearly part of, and linked to, a larger

intellectual and ideological project. That project contains a potent critique of America's contemporary world role, and a clarion call for broad citizen participation in the discussion, creation, and evaluation of foreign policy.

Hoff's essay begs the reader to think, to evaluate, to argue with the writer and her ideas. In this respect, it is a beginning point for discussion about its subject, which is, and should be, among the most compelling and controversial issues under discussion in our common civic life.

Hoff makes several key points which we all must remember as we seek a deeper understanding of America's role in the world:

1. Anyone who wants to understand America's past, present, and future role in the world must abandon a one-dimensional approach. The citizen who seeks understanding must apply the insights and techniques of a number of disciplines including history economics, politics, and ethics. This is so because foreign policy and international politics are intensely complicated matters which reflect a wide range of determinant variables.

2. There is no such thing as a simple, well-made, all purpose doctrine which can provide sure guidance in foreign affairs regardless of time or circumstance. The desire to have a simple "answer" to the problem of the shape and texture of America's role in the world is quite powerful. Such a desire can lead to a disastrous commitment to "doctrines" whose utility and efficacy have long since vanished. Change is a key, sometimes defining, condition of world politics. A prudent foreign policy requires an alert responsiveness to evolving contexts and circumstances.

3. America has been, and continues to be, susceptible to claiming an "exceptionally" moral impulse as *the* motivation for its action in foreign affairs. In truth, however, America has been largely motivated by a more narrow and immediate sense of its national interest. Like other nations, it claims the high moral ground as justification for what it does in the world. It does not necessarily deserve moral acclaim, however, simply because it is America. American foreign policy is just as fraught with tragedy, selfishness, insensitivity and mistakes as the foreign policy of most of the great power democracies.

4. The problem of executive prerogative in foreign affairs is a long standing, difficult, and continuing issue for anyone who wants to understand the way in which we govern our behavior in the world. The problem is as much a constitutional and structural issue as it is a

reflection of presidential personality and power. In a time in which international activity is ever more influential and comprehensive in the lives of all Americans, it is appropriate to reassess the range and limit of presidential power in foreign affairs.

5. There are many differing perspectives on how best to stimulate and use public sentiment and public participation to help define the character of America's role in world affairs. Yet, despite party, ideology, or interest, most observers would argue the need for a better informed, more aware, more connected citizenry. Despite the "messiness" of democratic process, such process must characterize America's whole approach to defining the future of our role in the world.

Much of what Hoff has to say makes good and simple sense. However, there are key points at which the careful reader could take exception to the main burden of her analysis:

1. Hoff clearly sides with those who accept the idea that most of America's foreign policy has reflected a simple and deterministic economic calculus. She is discomfited by the character of America's "Great Power" status in the post World War II era. Such discomfort seems to be a consequence of the conviction that the pursuit of America's economic, and strategic self interests, as defined in the period, has been wrong in some higher moral sense. This is arguable at best, and is an unsupported conclusion on the basis of the evidence offered in the essay.

2. Hoff leaves the impression with her reader that there was once some halcyon prior day of virtue and prudence in American foreign policy which we should seek to recapture. Many contemporary observers would take exception to her convictions in this matter. Some contend that we have remained a moral and democratic model for the nations—and that our compelling example and witness are the source of much of the movement toward freedom in this new decade. These observers would argue that America never did abandon its role as moral and model for the nations. Others contend that we never were such a model and should not strive to be so. America, they argue, is now more a partner than a model, more an equal than a mentor.

3. Hoff suggests that "perhaps it is time to place less emphasis on ordering the world and more on setting our own domestic house in order." Such a conviction seems to ignore the interdependence of domestic and international life which increasingly defines the character and quality of possibility in both realms. In fact, it almost makes

no sense anymore to speak of distinct domestic and international agendas. The two are so closely linked, so interconnected, that a national agenda must also be an international agenda. The "order" of the larger world in which we live is so key to our success at home that we must bend our best efforts to creating and defining that order. If we have the capacity to do so, and can develop a compelling vision for the shape of that order, it is in our best interest to act and to lead.

4. Finally, Hoff's arguments and analyses seem heavily colored by the philosophy of decline which, in recent years, has become the fashion in some parts of the American academy. One could read her as saying that America cannot and should not bear the burden of true international leadership because the state no longer retains the resources or the energy to lead. She calls for modesty, outlines limitations, argues against Great Power activism. She suggests, in some sense, that America retreat from the world. But why do this now? Especially when the need for leadership and engagement, resources and invention have never been greater? The world requires more of America than that she is "good" at home.

In an earlier era, when America was searching out a new role for itself, the trenchant and insightful scholar Kenneth Thompson lamented: "In these turbulent and uncertain times, any honest mind approaching the problems of world politics is tormented by a sense of inadequacies and limitations." There is so much to know, to evaluate, to understand in the field of international affairs. How is it possible that any scholar, let alone any citizen, can connect with and comprehend the truth? What is the truth anyway? Does it depend on where we stand, who we are, what we believe? Is it even accessible to us?

In a democracy such as ours, we must believe that we can know the truth about public affairs. Otherwise we might as well give up our rights and our franchise to experts, or wise men or shamans. The work of scholars such as Joan Hoff urges us to search for the truth and to confront its different versions in order that we might use our own intelligence and discretion. In Hoff's essay on "America's Role in the World" we are invited to read the work of a first-rate intellect and a passionate historical scholar. This essay should incite the very same kind of reflection and passion that gave it birth.

Kenneth L. Gladish, President,
Indiana Humanities Council

The Sea of Faith
Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore
Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furl'd.
But now I only hear
Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,
Retreating, to the breath
Of the night-wind, down the vast edges drear
And naked shingles of the world.

Ah, love, let us be true
To one another! for the world, which seems
To lie before us like a land of dreams,
So various, so beautiful, so new,
Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;
And we are here as on a darkling plain
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
Where ignorant armies clash by night.

from "Dover Beach" by Matthew Arnold

YOU CAN'T ALWAYS GET WHAT YOU WANT:

THE PARALYSIS OF AMERICAN ENERGY POLICY

Howard Schwartz

MATTHEW ARNOLD'S "DOVER BEACH" is one of our great statements of the theory that what characterizes modern life is the loss of the religious faith that defined Western civilization and held it and its people together. I have always loved Arnold's poem because it so effectively portrays one powerful view of the modern age, the idea that religious faith has been lost. Science, technology, reason and materialism have taken its place, says the poet, but the world envisioned by modern scientific thought "so various, so beautiful, so new," is really filled with false promises and expectations of peace, plenty, tranquility, and fulfillment that will not and cannot be met. Max Weber, the great sociologist of religion and theorist of bureaucracy wrote similarly of the feeling of "disenchantment," the loss of both mystery and meaning, that characterizes the modern world.

If Arnold and Weber are right—if we are in a fundamentally secular, scientific age—then we ought to find that energy policy is essentially a technological issue and that scientific expertise is required and indeed sufficient to enter into debates about it. But in fact we have found it extraordinarily difficult to formulate a workable energy policy. Why? I would argue that there are two reasons, one related to the way in which we assess energy options and the other related to the way our system of government works.

What I would first suggest is that contrary to Arnold's and Weber's assertions, faith, belief, and religion survive but in different forms, and these modern forms of belief shape our arguments over public policy even—or especially—in what appear to be technical or technological areas. In the formulation of energy policy, it is often scientists who are the "ignorant armies clashing by night." There is no scientific closure on such important questions as the relative cost effectiveness of various alternatives, the health and environmental

consequences of energy options, future demand for energy or how much conservation is obtainable. What we have instead are arguments over essential questions of values: How do we want to live with nature? How do we want to live with other people? How much risk are we willing to take and who should take it? Upon what grounds do we make decisions when experts are divided? Who should be authorized to answer these questions on our behalf? In short, what kind of life shall we lead?

These of course are not scientific questions at all but rather classic questions of philosophy and religion. Perhaps Matthew Arnold's own religious faith—and that of other Victorian Christians—has receded, but we still need non-scientific grounds to judge science, non-technological grounds to judge technology. And in fact, the debate over energy policy is characterized by the search for such grounds. Energy policy resolves itself into competing moral visions of the future. The question of whom we should empower to produce and distribute different kinds of energy cannot be separated from two other questions: What should we believe in? How shall we live?

To complicate matters, these fundamental questions of human life are being raised in a political system which is designed to shunt values to private life. The Founders designed a system that would push deeply held values to the margins of politics and put economic interest to the center, because therein lay the road to stability. So we have a stable system that we feel does not deal with our real problems. Energy policy reflects these characteristics.

The case for limiting the scope of politics was argued most eloquently by James Madison in his essays in the *Federalist*, especially the famous essay #10. According to Madison, our constitution is based on the following principles:

- An acceptance of the dominance of economic interests as the driving force in governmental policies;
- A fragmentation of authority (among branches of federal government and among the similarly fragmented states) which makes it hard for one interest or set of interests to defeat other interests;
- A dislike of zeal and ideology;
- A limited government (so that liberty is preserved).

The Madisonian system is designed to minimize government action and maximize deliberation and bargaining among a wide diversity of interests. The great fear underlying Madisonianism is that a legitimate interest might be suppressed. One of the system's political imperatives, therefore, is to ensure access to the system for any group that feels aggrieved. America has, as a result, greater access to the courts and greater statutory requirements for public involvements in the policy process than any other representative government. However, by defining government as the chief mediator among interests, we ignore government's role as the power that stands above private interests and acts on behalf of the people in its public capacity.

While we have a government that assumes that people always act on the basis of their private interests, we have a culture that:

- Proclaims we are better, unique, and different;
- Has a "can-do" spirit;
- Is based on deep religious faith and an expectation that our government will act morally and in support of morally correct causes;
- Believes that power and violence in support of justice is justified;
- Tempers the economic values of individual rationality and collective efficiency with a belief in sacrifice for a just cause.

In other words, much of our culture is at odds with much of our constitutional structure. This is precisely what Madison wanted, since he saw that our cultural imperatives needed to be checked lest we fall into religious wars and fanatic attempts by one faction to impose its will upon another.

So we have the government we do in order to overcome the religious and moral zeal of our culture; but we have the culture that we have in order to overcome the tendency of our government to inertia. On the one hand, we have a market economy and a political system that favors it and, on the other, religious values that drive people to try to impose non-economic principles on society as a whole. It is this tension that gives our political rhetoric its peculiar cast: apocalyptic images of disaster, a constant sense of crisis, but no institutions capable of addressing these concerns because the institutions are structured to produce incremental solutions to private

economic problems.

In a system like ours, only crisis, great moral outrage or demonstrable policy failure makes our government act comprehensively. Hence our system encourages apocalyptic visions of catastrophe, revelation of moral failure and the transformation of scientific issues into moral ones. In order to move the system a little, we need a lot of moral outrage, so moral outrage has become the dominant political strategy. Our most successful wars have been fought when we have seen ourselves as the champions of a great cause. And, of course, politicians try to capture that feeling with wars on poverty, drugs and the rest. We, as citizens, may be skeptical about someone else's war, but we have those of our own whether it is against drunk driving, poor schools or uncontrolled urban development. The metaphor of a just war is the only catalyst that can provide the conditions to overcome our system's inherent stasis. The only time the United States has had a coherent energy policy was when President Jimmy Carter convinced us that our survival as nation required wartime-like sacrifices in the form of conservation and Manhattan Project type crash investments in alternative fuels. Our government has begun to get concerned about global warming because of the apparent necessity to stave off impending catastrophe, but the American government is still less willing than that of any other democratic nation to commit itself to a course of action.

This reluctance to act is intensified, as noted above, because energy options are not a question of quantifiable scientific judgments but rather competing sets of values. The debate over our energy future can be resolved into two basic visions of the future, what Amory Lovins called the "hard" and "soft" energy paths, or, at a more general level, what Spencer Weart has called the conflict between the "White City" and "Arcadia." Lest anyone think that these two visions involve a contrast between a "pro-technology" and an "anti-technology" position, it must be stressed that both of our two visions are high-tech visions. Both require much sophisticated research and engineering, but they use completely different sets of values to direct that engineering and research.

The idea of the "White City" is generalized from the image of the idealized technological city of the future displayed at the 1893 Chicago World's Fair. The "hard" energy path is Lovin's label for the dominant mode of energy technology in our society. Energy production in White City, reflecting the values of the hard path, envisions large, central-

ized institutions which are orderly, clean, antiseptic, and smooth functioning. Humanity aims at domination of nature and natural forces, substantially altering them. Decisions are expected to be made by experts in science, engineering and management. This is the technology of gigantic hydroelectric dams, nuclear and coal fired power plants, and oil refineries as well as grid-like city streets, vast superhighways and electric transmission lines.

The "soft" energy path envisions Arcadian fusions of country and city. Arcadia requires technologies that are small, decentralized and human-sized. It aims at a minimal alteration of nature so that humanity can live in harmony with it and a diverse, complex web of individual or local technologies. Most energy production would be local. Technical knowledge would be accessible to all. Decision making would be participatory. Examples of soft energy technologies include solar panels on individual buildings which are built to maximize use of natural light and heat, streets designed for bicycles and pedestrians, and energy efficient mass transit such as light rail systems.

This clash of visions is what gives energy policy its particular fierceness. In them, we have two versions of ideas about paradise that have been secularized into technological utopias. As Americans, we believe that we can create the future we want. We think that all we need to do is to perfect the technology of our choice and we can have the world of our dreams. We go to Disney and Epcot Center in Florida and see today's White City laid out before us, ready to spread all over the world. We read Ernst Callenbach's *Ecotopia* or browse through the Real Goods catalogue of alternative energy products and wonder why American governments and energy companies ever wasted hundreds of billions of dollars on nuclear and fossil fuel energy when the soft energy path has been awaiting us for years. But we are unable to simply choose and move forward because of the religious nature of the conflict and the nature of our political system: we have questions of ultimate values being answered in a system that allows only incremental change.

Any attempt to change the world according to our values takes place in a specific political system that defines what types of issues will be taken seriously and who will be allowed to take part. Therefore, energy policy is not only a question of what is technically feasible and morally acceptable. It is also a question of political feasibility, what the political system will allow. Not only do energy policies have

to be based on technologies that work and on a vision of life that satisfies a politically aware public, they have to be such that they can be passed and implemented by a system that tends to frustrate coherent policy making: a political and administrative system that on the one hand encourages the entry of all interests and values into the process but on the other hand is based on a constitutional structure that frustrates any decisive action from taking place.

The result is a political system that changes the value-system of those trying to use it, and this too complicates the effort to establish a workable energy policy. Advocates of one position or another become more zealous, more apocalyptic in their vision, and thus less willing to compromise their positions. Because our political system makes it so hard for moral values and visions to become a serious part of the policy process, those advancing a vision find themselves marginalized. They therefore need to become more shrill and extreme in their rhetoric in order to gain media attention as well as to mobilize their followers. When rhetoric gets more extreme, the extreme rhetoric strengthens the case of those who want politics to be only bargaining among interests. The bargainers can argue that allowing values into the center of the political system strengthens extremists and raises passions to a dangerous pitch.

We have all figured out how to get the system to work without understanding that the way the system works affects the way we think and act. We get symbols and spectacle, not any real change in the situation. Wars and crises can be sustained only so long before the public gets tired of them, especially when there appears to be little tangible change in the situation. Rational discussion requires the discounting of hyperbolic discussions of the consequences of various courses of action, but the "just war" response is so deeply ingrained in our collective psychology, that we continue to rely upon it. Thus, we have trouble believing that nuclear power does not inevitably lead to Chernobyl (look at France). Conservation does not lead to economic stagnation (look at Germany and Japan). Powerful governmental controls do not necessarily lead to clean energy (look at the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe) nor do they necessarily lead to economic collapse (again look at Germany or Japan or Sweden). But rational discussion is ineffective (and even irrational) as a means of political action since it lacks the emotional fervor that produces results. The "results," however, are often, if not usually, ironic: a law that cannot be enforced, a set of policies that will not work, money that cannot be

well spent because the policies have been designed to satisfy symbolic needs.

Ironically, the same set of cultural values that pumps up religious and moral fervor to get government to act can also support a profound distrust and contempt for government altogether. We generally believe, again following Madison and Jefferson, that government governs best that governs least. We think that government action ought to be exceptional, believing that private individual or collective activity can usually solve social problems. So while we think that all problems can be solved, we are not sure we want the government to solve them, often believing the market, individual moral improvement or voluntary collective activity to be sufficient. But no matter how we think problems should be solved, we believe that they are always unique, moral challenges that will test our character and provide an opportunity for the American spirit to prevail.

As a result, our policies rock back and forth from wars against problems to an attitude that government action is hopeless (or makes problems worse) so we ought to leave things to the private sector. Thus, Carter's comprehensive energy policy is followed by Reagan's incoherent policy of a free market for imported oil but subsidies for nuclear power, the expiration of conservation tax credits in the name of the free market and attempts to sign cheap leases for coal and oil of federal lands and coastal waters in the name of the same free market. And the public has been satisfied with neither hysterical coherence nor hypocritical incoherence.

Having followed my argument, one might suppose that a coherent energy policy—or any public policy, for that matter—would be impossible in our country. It is true that the Founders generally lacked a theory that defined a proper sphere for positive and pro-active governmental activity. Madison could not tell us when or if a comprehensive governmental program were needed or what it would look like. Alexander Hamilton, on the other hand, could. Hamilton was one of the few Founders who had a clear vision of a positive role for government. It is his legacy that contains much of our record of clear, directed national policy. Examples may be found in Hamilton's own "report on Manufactures," which he tried to implement as our first Secretary of the Treasury, Henry Clay's National System, the program of the early Republican Party and the administrations of Theodore Roosevelt and Franklin Roosevelt. If history is any guide, coherent public policies, while difficult to implement, are not impossible.

Enlightened participation in the American political system requires, at the same time, a deep commitment to a moral cause—in order to move the system at all—and an understanding and acceptance that, because of the nature of our political system, little of what we want is likely to be achieved. And while we may be frustrated, America pluralism means that we all tend to be frustrated equally. If we can't impose our own vision of the future on society, it also means that someone else's vision isn't imposed on us. If Madison foresaw the dangers in one faction winning to the loss of everyone else, Hamilton and Lincoln understood the dangers if the government could not act at all. To have a government that can govern through clear policies while preserving liberty and pluralism remains the challenge of constitutional government in America. After 200 years, we remain a deeply religious and zealous people who want to realize "the shining city on the hill." We must also remain aware, as Madison was, that our zeal can cloud our judgment. Zeal may propel us into the political arena—and into the lives of our fellow citizens—but it cannot reconciles our vision of the "shining city" with theirs. For an energy policy to emerge, we need both the passion that drives the devotees of the "hard" and "soft" paths and the patient deliberation of democratic politics, what Max Weber called "the slow sawing of hard boards."

FOR FURTHER READING

Marshall Berman, *All That is Solid Melts into Air: The Experience of Modernity*

Ernst Callenbach, *Ecotopia: The Notebooks and Reports of William Weston*

Murray Edelman, *Constructing the Political Spectacle*

Amory Lovins, *Soft Energy Paths: Toward a Durable Peace*

Theodore Lowi, *The End of Liberalism: The Second Republic of the United States*

Leo Marx, *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and Pastoral Idea*

Spencer Weart, *Nuclear Fear: A History of Images*

COMMENTARY

If the reader of Mr. Schwartz's article is startled by his approach to energy policy, I fully understand. Audience members of a recent "global warming" conference in my home state of Delaware experienced similar confusion. His article, like our conference, is very different from the majority of thinking most of us normally encounter on the energy question. Where are the legalistic, technocratic, scientific arguments? Where is the environmentalists' ire at "wasteful," even "conspiratorial" big business interests? Or the smug platitudes and assertions of a highly visible CEO? Or the temporizing of understandably harassed EPA bureaucrats?

The point of Mr. Schwartz's interesting reflections, and indeed this entire booklet, is that the issues that compel our attention as citizens consist of more than legalistic and economic and political dimensions. And their resolution can be, indeed should be, pursued by means other than nationally televised tag-team wrestling matches among interest group superstars.

Central to the work of the state humanities councils is the knowledge that the economic and technological issues that seem to overwhelm us are enmeshed in a larger matrix of history, human values, and beliefs. And, far from increasing the complexity of already recondite questions, consideration of the historical and ideological roots of issues like energy policy serves to clarify and make these issues accessible to non-specialists.

Thus, Schwartz sets aside technology and science and discusses the tangled web of our contending belief systems (or visions of the future of society) and the fundamental principles that underlie our political system. One need not agree with all aspects of his argument to see that he is on to something that is both important and liberating. Suddenly the ineffectiveness of our system to make real headway on energy questions over the last several decades becomes clearer. The cause is not that those in charge are dumb knuckle-draggers in the thrall of special interests with which we disagree. Resolution is fleeting because the stakes are enormous, more important than the economic and technological arguments currently presented. To say "energy policy" is to delve to the very heart of our understanding of ourselves as a people and a nation.

Schwartz is implying two things: 1) the average citizen has been closed out of the energy debate (and most other environmental de-

bates) because the questions have been defined too narrowly, leaving lawyers and scientists in the pay of the opposing sides battling it out with lawyers and scientists in the pay of the bureaucrats; and 2) once the fundamental nature of the energy question becomes clear, our own political tradition contains the seeds of a coherent response.

I would like to add another dimension to Schwartz's reflections on the question of energy policy. Embedded in the wider environmental debate, the energy question touches on a fundamental tenet of the Western tradition. And movement toward its resolution promises to usher in a change in our thinking that will be Copernican in its dimensions.

I invoke the name of Copernicus on purpose. Up to the sixteenth century, the prevailing cosmological notion was "geocentrism." According to the writings of the second century, A.D. scholar Ptolemy and other classical authors, the earth was thought to be stationary. It was the center of the universe, and the sun, planets, and stars revolved around the earth on crystalline spheres. The stationary earth was the linchpin in a world view that was both coherent and comforting: cosmology, theology, and morality formed an integrated whole, an ordered notion of the universe and human beings' place within it.

Then along came Copernicus with his destructive, heliocentric view—a view that placed the sun at the center of the universe. Copernicus was only half right; he believed that the sun was stationary. But nevertheless the damage had been done. When the linchpin of a stationary earth at the center of the universe had been removed from the medieval world view, the entire edifice of beliefs broke apart. That was the Copernican revolution and we still live with its results and implications today.

I believe that the current environmental debates that presently confront us contain the kernel of a similar revolution because those debates call into question our prevailing anthropocentric notions. Anthropocentrism implies that humankind has intrinsic worth separate from nature, that human beings indeed are morally separate from nature, that we act upon nature from the outside, and that questions of how to manage nature should be considered solely in terms of how human beings are affected. Anthropocentrism places humankind alone at the center of consideration. This is the root of what some authors call the "imperial self" and what others simply term our arrogance and self-centeredness in dealing with environmental questions.

Schwartz touches on this when he discusses the "hard" and "soft" energy paths. The hard path reflects our prevailing anthropocentrism where, Schwartz states, "humanity aims at domination of nature and natural forces, substantially altering them." The soft path according to Schwartz "aims at a minimal alteration of nature so that humanity can live in harmony with it..." The "soft" path, in my opinion, is thus a policy reflection of a fundamental alteration in our prevailing value system. One can conclude, therefore, that the soft path will not come easily or without tremendous changes in our way of thinking.

What sort of change? I recall an interesting statement about the question of what it means to accept a world view that is not anthropocentric. European settlers, the author of a historical geography stated, often treated Indians as though they were part of the landscape. In fact, Native Americans *were* in many ways part of the landscape. They had worked out a long-standing close relationship with their physical world. They identified themselves with the land, treated it as a neighbor, as God, and as a world to talk to and to exchange things with. Perhaps that is the shape our future thinking will take, perhaps we have to become part of our landscape if we are to throw off our inbred anthropocentrism and embrace an ethical position that includes both human beings *and* nature at the center of things.

Schwartz's (and my) point is *not* that a humanities perspective on the energy question reveals a clear answer to the question of what United States energy policy should be. Rather, it is that an exploration of the fundamental historical and ideological roots of the controversy will reveal the true nature of that question and open the way for all citizens of the Republic to join in the debate. And, in our society, therein lies the path to resolution.

Henry Hirschbiel, Executive Director,
Delaware Humanities Forum

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Leslie Pickering Francis is Associate Professor of Philosophy and Professor of Law at the University of Utah. She is chair of the Committee on Philosophy and Law of the American Philosophical Association.

Kenneth L. Gladish is President of the Indiana Humanities Council, a member of the Indiana Historical Administrators Group and the Indiana Commission for the Bicentennial of the United States Constitution and an adjunct Assistant Professor of Political Science at Butler University in Indianapolis.

Henry Hirschbiel is Executive Director of the Delaware Humanities Forum. Before assuming this position in 1982, he was Program Associate with the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities. He was an International Research and Exchanges Board Fellow in Leningrad in 1974-75 and has delivered several papers on Russian social and economic history.

Joan Hoff is Professor of History at Indiana University in Bloomington and coeditor of the international *Journal of Women's History*. Previously she was Executive Secretary of the Organization of American Historians. Her most recent book is *Law, Gender and Injustice: A Legal History of U.S. Women*.

Delmont Oswald is Executive Director of the Utah Humanities Council and a member of the board of directors of the Federation of State Humanities Councils. He has taught a variety of history courses at Brigham Young University and Westminster College. He is the author of *The Life and Adventures of James P. Beckwourth* and a number of articles.

Howard Schwartz has been with the Washington State Energy Office since 1989, first as Program Manager of the State Energy Code Program and currently as Manager of the Residential Programs Section. Previously he was assistant professor in the Department of Political Science at the University of Montana.

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